hledger Plain-text accounting

START HERE

`hledger add`
Enter transactions

`hledger check`
Find errors in the journal

`hledger bal`
Balances per account

`hledger -f <file> bal`
Use a specific journal

`hledger reg <acct>`
Postings with running total

`hledger is -M`
Monthly income statement

`hledger bs`
Balance sheet

`hledger print`
Show journal entries

Bank CSV downloaded → `import` → **Journal** plain text → `query + report` → **Reports** bal, reg, is, bs → `-O csv/json` → **Other tools** spreadsheet, scripts

CONCEPTS

Everything is read from a plain text journal; hledger never edits it except add and import. Set LEDGER_FILE to point at yours (default ~/.hledger.journal).

Account types come from top-level names (assets, liabilities, equity, revenues, expenses) or from account directives; bs and is rely on them.

JOURNAL FORMAT

A transaction

```
2026-10-22 * Grocer | weekly
shop  ; food:
    expenses:food          $45.20
    assets:bank:checking
# amount inferred
```

`2026-10-22 * desc`
Date, optional status (* cleared, ! pending), description
Postings are indented; two or more spaces separate account and amount.

`; note  tag:value`
Comment with a tag
Tags are name:value pairs in comments, comma-separated.

`= $100`
Balance assertion after a posting
Fails the check if the account balance differs.

JOURNAL FORMAT (cont.)

`10 AAPL @ $150`
Unit price (cost)

`10 AAPL @@ $1500`
Total price (cost)

`account assets:bank`
Declare an account

`commodity $1,000.00`
Declare commodity format

`include <file>`
Include another journal

`# comment`
Comment line

QUERIES

`acct:<regex>`
Match account names
A bare word is also an account match.

`desc:<regex>`
Match description

`amt:'>100'`
Match amount

`date:2026-10`
Match a date range

`tag:<name>=<value>`
Match a tag

`status:*`
Cleared only (also -C, -P, -U)

`not:<query>`
Negate a query

`depth:2`
Limit account depth

BALANCE REPORTS

`hledger bal`
Account balances

`hledger bal <query>`
Balances for matching accounts

`hledger bal -t`
Show as indented tree

`hledger bal -N`
Hide the total line

`hledger bal --depth 2`
Roll up to depth 2

`hledger bal -2`
Same as --depth 2

`hledger bal -M`
One column per month

`hledger bal -H`
Historical balances, include earlier postings

`hledger bal -T`
Add a row total column

`hledger bal -A`
Add an average column

`hledger bal -S`
Sort by amount

`hledger bal --budget`
Actual vs periodic budget goals

`hledger bs`
Balance sheet

`hledger is`
Income statement

`hledger cf`
Cash flow

REGISTER AND PRINT

`hledger reg <acct>`
Postings with running total

`hledger reg -M <acct>`
Monthly totals for an account

`hledger areg <acct>`
One line per transaction in an account

`hledger print`
Show transactions in journal format

`hledger print -x`
Show inferred amounts explicitly

`hledger print -O csv`
Export transactions as CSV

TIME AND VALUATION

`-p 'last month'`
Report period
Also 'this year', '2026Q3', 'from 2026-01 to 2026-04'.

`-b 2026-01-01 -e 2026-04-01`
Start (inclusive) and end (exclusive)

`-D / -W / -M / -Q / -Y`
Daily to yearly interval

`-B`
Convert to cost

`-V`
Convert to market value at period end

TIME AND VALUATION (cont.)

`--forecast`
Include periodic transactions

INPUT AND ENTRY

`hledger -f <file> <cmd>`
Read a specific file (repeatable)

`hledger add`
Enter transactions interactively
Finish with . or Ctrl+D.

`hledger import <file.csv>`
Add new CSV records to the journal
Uses <file>.csv.rules and skips already imported dates.

`hledger import --dry-run <file.csv>`
Preview what would be imported

`hledger -f <file.csv> --rules <rules> print`
Convert CSV with a rules file

CSV RULES

bank.csv.rules

```
skip 1
fields date, description,
amount
date-format %d/%m/%Y
currency $
account1 assets:bank:checking
if grocer
  account2 expenses:food
```

`skip <n>`
Skip header lines

CSV RULES (cont.)

`fields <a>, <b>, ...`
Name CSV columns

`account2 <acct>`
Set the other account

`if <regex>`
Conditional block of rules

CHECKS AND INFO

`hledger check`
Run basic checks

`hledger check -s`
Strict: also accounts and commodities declared

`hledger accounts`
List accounts

`hledger payees`
List payees

`hledger stats`
Journal summary

`hledger <cmd> -h`
Options of a command

`-O csv / -O json`
Machine readable output

RECIPES

Monthly spending by category

```
hledger bal expenses --depth 2
-M -S -T
```

Import a bank export

```
hledger import --dry-run
bank.csv
hledger import bank.csv
hledger check -s
```